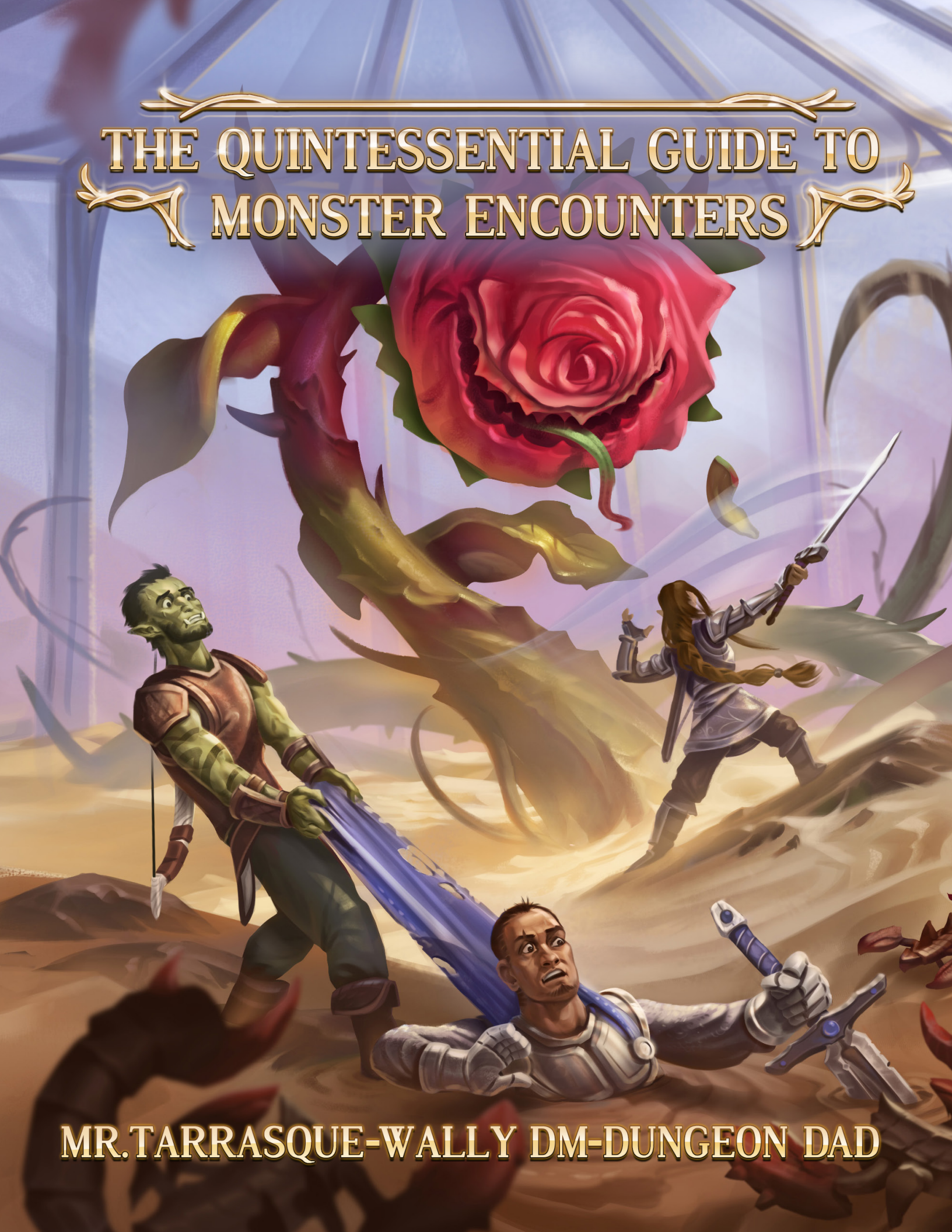
THE QUINTESSENTIAL GUIDE TO MONSTER ENCOUNTERS



MR.TARRASQUE-WALLY DM-DUNGEON DAD

Guide to Monster Encounters

Welcome!

Please note that this document is intended as a preview. All of the below remains in the playtesting phase until the Quintessential Guide to Monster Encounters' release. We appreciate all feedback from the community. To get involved, join the Discord channels of Mr.Tarrasque, WallyDM, and/or DungeonDad.

Free downloadable sample

Do you ever find yourself flipping through a TTRPG module looking for the perfect monster or encounter to pit against your players? Most books offer you a vast amount of content in an easy to carry format but can feel overwhelming at the same time. Sometimes the monster's challenge rating (CR) is too low, or even worse, too high and you find yourself searching for that one encounter that feels just right.

That changes now.

We believe that, in a sense, it should be the other way around. That magical moment of seeïng the perfect encounter for your desert campaign should not be destroyed by it being written solely for a group of adventurers double the level, or in an entirely different environment than your party. With the Quintessential Guide to Monster Encounters (QGME), we want you to learn the skills to adapt anything you see to your own game.

How to use this book

We want you to use the QGME in whatever way you want - that's rule number one. But, if you would like some further guidance and tips on its use, here is a brief summary.

Chapter One: The GMs Guide to Monster Encounters

The first chapter is designed, not only to offer you insight into how we go about building and running encounters, but also to give you the tools and confidence to adapt everything you see to your own game. Sometimes, it is as 'simple' as changing the monsters' challenge rating; other times, adding in a treacherous environmental effect or puzzle can do the trick. Indeed, if you find yourself in the middle of combat and are witness to a true slaughterfest, don't panic; improvisation skills are covered as well.

Chapter Two: Quintessential Monster Encounters

Here you will find twenty one (or more, if we make our stretch goals) prewritten monster encounters from the minds of Mr.Tarrasque, WallyDM, and/or DungeonDad, as well as a host of wonderful guest writers. Don't worry; all come with tips to, again, adapt them to your party's needs.

Unique monsters

Every encounter in the QGME comes with at least one brand new monster with its own unique features. These are not published in any bestiaries or other previous titles, and we hope you enjoy them and use them across multiple games and tables.

Different tiers of play

Because we want these encounters to be playable by all groups, no matter their player experience or party level, we present environmental checks and saving throws with variable difficulty levels, requiring higher or lower numbers depending on which difficulty setting you are running: 'Beginner', 'Intermediate', or 'Advanced'. It is presented as follows: Make a DC 10/15/20 Dexterity check to unlock the door. Beginner difficulty rating is considered level 1-5 (the first number), intermediate is 6-10 (second), and advanced is any level 11 or higher (third number listed). Occasionally, we also use this method to refer to other numbers like the amount of minions a monster spawns.

Magic items

A selection of the encounters in this book feature new and unique magic items. These items do not follow the system of scaling detailed above, so we advise you to consider their effects carefully, re-balancing to suit the current tier of play if necessary, before handing them to your party.

To give you an idea of what the Quintessential Guide to Monster Encounters can mean for your table, we present you with a selection of three different encounters, ready for you to run for, and adapt to, your party.

Red Desert Flower

Hard to Deadly Encounter
Complexity Level: **Intermediate**

The Scene

Many species of vegetation peak your interest within the greenhouse you just discovered, but one plant stands out as a cut above the others, both in size and grandeur. An enormous, red, rose-like flower towers above you, standing around 25 feet away from the path among a group of plants only native to desert lands.

The owner of the mansion clearly went through a lot of effort to create the perfect setting, using yellow sand and brown rocks to complete the picture.

This encounter is set in a greenhouse; it could be attached to an old mansion, or the characters could stumble upon it while traversing an abandoned village inside an enchanted forest.

Whatever the case, the previous owner clearly had a passion for exotic plants, and constructed this glass building for the sole purpose of showing off their collection. Were they a noble who traveled the world searching for secrets, or an old mage who sought out the magical properties from foliage to enhance their alchemy business?

Let's Prepare

The Setup

Characters might be on their guard when searching this area since they are likely aware that some exotic plants have defensive mechanisms strong enough to kill any humanoid that dares venture close enough. The real danger, however, comes from an unexpected source, as the far end of the greenhouse holds a small selection of desert plants that contain magical properties.

If they are even the slightest bit reckless, the party might find themselves stumbling into an area of treacherous quicksand that protects these rare species, resulting in what could be a deadly encounter. Any character that shows a particular interest in the red desert flower, or perhaps just does not trust the situation, can tap into its magic by succeeding on a DC 12/15/20 Intelligence (Arcana) check.

On a success, the character learns that the flower has magical properties, but does not learn what they are. If the check succeeds by five or more, they are certain that the magical effects are not entirely harmful (see Sidebar: Greed).

GREED

The word 'entirely' is very important here. It implies that the magical properties harvested from the red desert flower are in fact not directly harmful, but leaves the door open for some negative consequences if the characters get greedy. This is something you could capitalize on later if they decide to harvest the plant at the end of this encounter.

The Threat

A 20 by 20 foot area of hazardous quicksand, almost unrecognizable to the naked eye, lies next to the stone path. Only characters with a passive Perception of 17/19/21 or more notice the quicksand.

If a creature steps in this area, it falls in. Doing so disrupts the desert scorpions crawling within. When this happens, read or paraphrase the following:

You put a foot in the soft, beach-like sand next to the path, and make your way past a few cacti. After taking what has to be less than five steps, you drop down as if falling into a pit. Instead, you find yourself knee-deep in an almost liquid sand, and sinking at a disturbingly high speed.

If you would like to make it more difficult for your party to spot the quicksand, instead of simply increasing the DC, experiment with distance.

Maybe it is only detectable from ten feet away? Or even five? This is especially useful if your party is of a higher level than the flower's stat block suggests; starting combat with one or more player characters in the quicksand will dramatically increase the encounter difficulty.

Roll for Initiative

Starting the Encounter

When the first character falls into the quicksand, roll 1d4+1. This is the number of rounds before the red desert flower transforms into its true form. When this happens, read or paraphrase the following:

While you find yourself in an already treacherous situation, you hear a loud cracking sound. Looking over to the red desert flower, you notice it now stands at almost double the height as it stretches itself into an enormous, flesh-eating abomination.

With a rose-like head that almost seems to laugh at you, it swings its long vines across the area. You almost lose your balance when roots as big as a horse pop up from the sand.

Running the Quicksand

This special quicksand is extremely hazardous, and a series of checks must be made to escape it. Medium-sized creatures experience four 'danger levels' (described below) before they are entirely engulfed by it. Small creatures skip the effects of the first danger level and immediately find themselves sunken to the shoulders. When the first creature falls in, roll for initiative.

Danger Level One. A creature that falls in immediately sinks waist deep into the quicksand and is restrained. It can use its action to try to escape the quicksand by making a DC 15/17/19 Strength (Athletics) check. On a success, it struggles free.

Danger Level Two. A creature that fails the level one Strength (Athletics) check made to escape the quicksand immediately sinks all the way down to its shoulders. In addition to the effects suffered from the first danger level, the creature is unable to attack or cast spells that use somatic components. It can use its action to try to partly free itself (therefore returning to danger level one) by succeeding on a DC 15/17/19 Strength (Athletics) check.

An allied creature that has not fallen into the quicksand and is within five feet can use its action to pull the submerged creature some way out of the quicksand (therefore returning to danger level one) by succeeding on a DC 17/19/21 Strength (Athletics) check.

Danger Level Three. A creature that fails the level two Strength (Athletics) check immediately sinks almost down to the top of its head, and can only continue breathing by tilting its head back to take gulps of air. In addition to the effects suffered from the previous danger levels, the creature is incapacitated.

An allied creature that has not fallen into the quicksand and is within five feet can use its action to pull the submerged creature some way out of the quicksand (therefore returning to danger level two) by succeeding on a DC 19/21/23 Strength (Athletics) check.

Danger Level Four. If the submerged creature's allies fail the level three Strength (Athletics) check, it is fully engulfed by the quicksand. The creature cannot breathe, and attacks from the desert scorpions automatically hit.

Attempting to pull a fully engulfed creature back up to the point where it can breathe requires a DC 20/22/24 Strength (Athletics) check. On a success, the creature returns to the effects of danger level three.

DANGEROUS QUICKSAND

To increase the difficulty of the encounter yet further, add an additional check for allied characters who are using their action to aid a teammate who has fallen into the quicksand (see Running the Quicksand).

If they fail the Strength (Athletics) check, they must succeed on a DC 12/15/18 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to not lose their balance and fall in themselves.

Every creature that falls into the quicksand awakens 6/8/10 **desert scorpions**. They act on their own initiative and will fight until they are destroyed.

Desert Scorpions

Tiny Beast, unaligned

Armor Class 11 (natural armor)
Hit Points 10 (4d4+0)
Speed 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)	8 (-1)	2 (-4)

Senses blindsight 10ft., passive Perception 10
Languages -
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)
Proficiency Bonus +2

Actions

Sting. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 1 (1d1) piercing damage , and the target must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, taking 4 (1d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Red Desert Flower

Huge Plant, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 171 (18d12 + 54)
Speed 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Str +7, Con +6
Skills Stealth +7
Damage Resistances cold, fire
Damage Immunities lightning, poison
Condition Immunities blinded, deafened, exhaustion
Senses blindsight 60ft. (blind beyond this radius), tremorsense 20ft, passive Perception 10
Languages -
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

False Appearance. While the red desert flower remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal large flower.

Growing in the Face of Danger. While the red desert flower remains motionless, its size is counted as Large (instead of Huge).

Rooted. Due to the presence of many roots, the area within 10 feet of the red desert flower is difficult terrain.

Actions

Multiattack. *The red desert flower can make three Vine Slash attacks, or one Bite attack. Alternatively, the red desert flower can make one Vine Slam attack against each creature that is grappled by it*

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (3d8+4) piercing damage.

Vine Slash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 25 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 17 (3d8+4) slashing damage If the target is a creature, it is grappled (escape DC 15). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained. The red desert flower has 3 vines, each of which can grapple one target.

Vine Slam. The red desert flower slams a creature that is grappled by it either into another creature grappled by it, or into a solid surface. The creature must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw, or it takes 22 (4d8+4) bludgeoning damage and is stunned until the end of the red desert flower's next turn. On a successful save, the creature takes half the bludgeoning damage and is not stunned.

Brutal Bite. The red desert flower bites one stunned creature that is grappled by it. The attack automatically hits and deals 49 (7d12+4) piercing damage.

Tactics and Adaptations

The red desert flower is slow; it rarely moves around at all during its lifetime, as it prefers to root down. It instead uses its reach to defeat its prey. The red desert flower uses patience to assess the situation. It prefers to engage with groups of creatures that are preoccupied with escaping the quicksand, and strikes when they least expect it.

Since this encounter is meant to be playable at almost any tier, below are some loose ideas for how to adapt the monster without losing the essence of the encounter. Of course, you can tweak things like armor class and hit points (see Chapter X: Quintessential Guide to Adapting Encounters, included in full version of QGtME), but other, perhaps less-obvious ways include:

- Increase or decrease the maximum number of creatures that can be grappled by the red desert flower.
- Remove the difficult terrain around the flower if your players have a hard time getting around. If you implement this part through the encounter, try to justify this in-game; perhaps it is withdrawing some of its roots due to the damage being done to it.
- If a character is repeatedly failing the Strength (Athletics) checks to escape the quick sand, the red desert flower can 'save' them by targeting them with its grapple. If it hits, the character is now only one successful saving throw away from getting to safety.
- If the red desert flower is not identified as a creature (as opposed to a normal flower) the characters are surprised when combat begins.

Ending the Encounter

The red desert flower fights until it is destroyed. It sees the desert environment as its territory and lays claim to any living creature therein as prey.

When destroyed, it loses all signs of life and turns into the dried out and colorless pile one would expect from killing a common weed. A translucent nectar pours out of its body which can be harvested as a wondrous item (see Magic Items at the end of the encounter).

If any party members remain stuck in the quicksand, retain initiative order until the situation is resolved. Once the flower is destroyed, it should be relatively simple to take care of any remaining desert scorpions, or you may choose to have the little critters flee when they realize their prey is no longer focused on a larger target.

Magic Items

Red Desert Flower Essence

Wonderous item, legendary

Slaying the red desert flower is no easy feat to accomplish, but those that do are greatly rewarded. A sticky nectar flows through the plant's body, but turns black only seconds after pouring out of its wounds.

A character that succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival), or a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check, can act quickly enough to harvest 1d6+1 portions of the magical substance. provided that they have a suitable container to store it in.

The red desert flower essence has the ability to increase vigor, but be aware; overconsumption may cause side effects.

Consumption (within a 7 day timeframe)	**Effect**
1 portion	The creature can roll one hit die and add its constitution modifier. The creature's hit point maximum increases by an amount equal to the result.
2 portions	In addition to the previous effects, the creature's hit point maximum further increases by an amount equal to its constitution modifier.
3 portions	The creature must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw, or start violently vomiting. All previous effects are lost, and the creature cannot gain any positive effects from the essence for one month. A creature vomiting this way is incapacitated for one round.
4 portions	The creature must succeed on a DC 25 Constitution saving throw, or start violently vomiting. All previous effects are lost, and the creature cannot gain any positive effects from the essence for one month. A creature vomiting this way is incapacitated for one round. In addition, the creature must roll one hit die. Its hit point maximum decreases by an amount equal to the result. This effect can only be cured by a greater restoration or wish spell.
5 portions	The creature drops to zero hit points and has to start rolling death saving throws. At the GM's discretion, the creature may suffer side effects long after recovering.

Roggit Bog Frog

Easy to Medium Encounter
Complexity Level: **Beginner/Intermediate**

The Scene

With no immediate danger or quest presenting itself, and the weather foggy and humid outside, you have decided that the best thing to do today is enjoy a drink at the local tavern. Adventure, of course, can find you no matter where you may be. As you are mid-drink, a townsperson bursts through the tavern doors shouting,

"The town is under attack! Frog riders are attacking our citizens!"

A concerned patron stands up on their chair, peers out the window, and exclaims,

"Hey, is that Elaine the baker? What is she doing riding that giant frog?"

The bard stops playing, the room goes silent, and the patrons of the tavern look to you for action.

This encounter begins in a tavern in the example detailed below, though the NPC could realistically run into any non-remote location the characters are currently situated in. It could be a tavern in a small fishing town with nearby lakes and ponds, or a trading post at the edge of a backwoods swamp where the PCs are currently picking up supplies; it is up to you.

The only necessity for the encounter is some sort of body of water nearby for the frogs to return to should the tides of battle turn against them, or for when they have had their fill. Elaine the baker is used as an example in the read-aloud text for this encounter; substitute her and any other named NPC for ones of your own creation, if you wish.

Outside, three humanoids have arrived on the scene, riding on three **roggit bog frogs**. Unbeknownst to the characters, the riders are under the sway of the frogs, who are in town to scrounge up a humanoid or two for their quarterly meal and are hoping to have their fill and be on their way.

Hysteria has hit the streets; innocent men, women and children are panicking, and running in and out of danger. This has, as a result, caused too much of a scene and so the roggits have not finished their mission in time. Now, the player characters must save the day.

Let's Prepare

The Setup

Prior to your game session, provide your players with a short list of NPCs in town. Ask them to each pick an NPC that they trust and one that they have always been suspicious of.

With this information in mind, you can place Elaine the baker, for example, on the back of one of the frogs. Perhaps she is a town favorite that is trusted and cherished; the players will probably feel the need to be careful during combat so they do not accidentally harm her.

Kevin the town guard, on the other hand, has perhaps always been a bit suspicious and is not well liked. The party could easily see Kevin, or his counterpart of your choosing, as an evil, frog-riding bandit with malicious intent when, in reality, Kevin simply hates his job and is merely a harmless jerk under the thrall of his mount. Having the integrated NPCs be familiar should have them second guessing their true intentions.

The Threat

The roggit bog frog is a beast with a moderate degree of intelligence. It is able to enhance its own combat abilities, and reach its full potential as a formidable creature, by integrating a humanoid creature of Medium size or smaller into its biological structure.

The roggit begins by attacking with its tongue: a 10 foot long force of nature that is tough, durable and able to lift up to 10 times the frog's weight. Once a victim is grappled by the frog's tongue, the roggit can squeeze them to death, reel them in to swallow them, or secrete a charming agent in its saliva, and place them on the frog's back, allowing intricate, thin hairs to meld into their skin.

Once the victim fails the saving throw against this effect, their body and mind become an appendage that the roggit can use to enhance its power.

Roll for Initiative

Starting the Encounter

Each of the three roggits acts on its own initiative roll. The primary objective for the adventurers should be to ensure the safety of the townsfolk, save the NPCs that have been integrated, and make sure that the frogs are no longer a threat.

The streets are filled with NPCs in full panic mode running to and fro - plenty of targets for the roggits to try and swallow as early as round 1 of combat. Hysterical townsfolk could even be clawing at the sides of the giant frogs, begging for their parent, sibling, or friend to get off of the beasts, totally unaware that their loved ones are under the control of the roggits.

It is recommended that some personality is attached to the roggits' victims, and that time is taken to explain in detail how their massive tongues lurch out to grapple, for example, the librarian or a local fisher. These are likely NPCs that the characters have had prior interactions with, and it should be suitably affecting that the creatures are swallowing them mercilessly.

The goal of each frog in the first round of combat is to use its Tongue Wrap attack to grapple an innocent bystander, swallow them, and then try to escape back to the pond from which they came. They use their frogback rider's Slowing Sphere ability in an attempt to slow down any potential threats that try to stop them, but can also speak through their captive riders using their known languages.

Roggits spread out in combat, usually maintaining at least 30 feet of separation between one another.

Options: Modes of Play

Depending on your campaign setting, and how you would like your roggits to behave in your game world, there are two main ways that you might choose to run the bulk of this encounter, detailed here as 'modes': **Deception Mode**, and **Shield Mode**. These modes are:

Deception Mode. In this mode, the three roggits are ridden by NPCs that the party is not familiar with (so be sure to account for this in your opening read-aloud text). The roggits act as though their NPC riders are warriors aiming to terrorize the citizens of the town, and that the roggits themselves are merely animal mounts. They use the NPCs to cast Slowing Sphere spells, and use their voices to communicate demands, threats and taunts.

As the GM, provide clues that things are not exactly as they appear, either in your read-aloud text or with additional information obtained by skill checks. Wisdom (Perception) checks, passive or otherwise, might reveal peculiarities in the NPCs behavior - maybe they stare fixedly and unblinking while they talk, or are not using words common to the dialect of the area. Perhaps a Wisdom (Insight) check could determine that the NPCs are not acting with intent, prompting checks to ascertain the true intention of their roggit mounts.

Shield Mode. This mode assumes that the players know the riders mounted on the frogs, and can therefore guess that they are innocent victims placed in harm's way. The bog frogs, however, know this as well. Having NPCs in need of saving is insurance for the frogs to avoid being hit by area of effect spells such as fireball or lightning bolt. They may convey that any harm to them will no doubt bring death to their rider. They attempt to intimidate and persuade anyone that stands in their way to step aside, claiming no one else will get hurt.

Maybe the frogback riders are local townsfolk and, if killed in combat, a nearby loved-one screams in despair that an adventurer has killed their friend or family member. Having the integrated known NPCs acting as unwilling aggressors can serve as an interesting conflict of interest and morality that continues to unfold as the combat encounter progresses.

NPC RIDERS

If you plan to run this encounter in Deception Mode, consider who the NPCs might be. Perhaps they are visitors from out of town? You may allow suspicious adventurers to make a Wisdom (Perception) check to notice that the 'raiders' on the back of the frogs are dressed like nobles, farmers, or blacksmiths.

Tactics and Adaptations

Once a roggit has swallowed a helpless victim, it aims to return to the swamp or pond from which it came. It uses its full movement, a dash action and its daily misty step in order to expedite its escape. It also has a jumping ability that might allow it to better evade pursuers over unfavorable terrain.

If a roggit's path is impeded, it will continue to fight, using its rider's Slowing Sphere in conjunction with its powerful Tongue Wrap attack to grapple and squeeze. A roggit can continue its normal movement while squeezing the life out of a grappled target though, if the threat to it is minimal, it may decide to strangle the target to death to set an example to anyone else that stands in its way.

If a roggit loses more than half of its hit points, its focus shifts to preserving its own life and finding the best route to retreat. A roggit with less than a quarter of its hit point maximum goes into full panic mode and tries to escape. If it still has an integrated NPC rider, it uses them as a mouthpiece to try and plead for its own life. It may seek a deal to be allowed safe passage back to its pond or swamp, which may include betraying its allies, coughing up swallowed victims, or discussing terms of release for their integrated NPC, when it feels that it is in a safe position to do so.

Roggits are not loyal to one another. They are self-centered and see their fellow frogs' misfortunes or failures as opportunities for their own survival.

If the original NPC rider is killed, or somehow removed from the integration with the back of the frog (perhaps by creative character actions such as shoving, teleportation or telekinesis) then, depending on its current hit point total, it may try to find a replacement. It uses its Tongue Wrap ability to get a new NPC into place as soon as it is able, or may even try to grapple, charm, and integrate one of the player characters, dramatically altering the stakes of the encounter.

There are multiple ways to increase or decrease the difficulty of this encounter to make it playable with groups at any tier. These include:

- Adding an element of weather, such as a torrential downpour or dense fog. This limits visibility on the battlefield, a tactic that has led to success for the roggits in previous raids.
- Increasing or decreasing the number of civilians in the immediate area. Civilians might provide an unwitting distraction, allowing you to take some pressure off the player characters, or get in the way of the player characters, making it more difficult to attack the roggits.
- Increasing or decreasing the number of roggits, or adapting their stats to increase or decrease their challenge rating.

A CHANGE OF TACTICS

The roggits are insightful enough to assess whether their deceptive tactics are effective. If a player character kills an NPC rider while the frog is still in Deception Mode, that particular roggit may decide to play the role of innocent mount, halting aggressive tactics and trying to slink off out of sight as if it were simply a dumb mount used as a beast of war by the fallen NPC.

If the deception tactics stop working, they shift into Shield Mode or, depending on their current hit point total, begin to fall back to the pond from which they came.

Ending the Encounter

When the last of the roggits has either surrendered, died or fled, the adventurer's are left with the aftermath of a panicked community. They may encounter concerned or outraged townsfolk that bombard them with questions, demanding answers as to what has transpired. Meanwhile, friends and family will be skittering about trying to find lost loved ones that were involved in the skirmish.

If any of the integrated riders or NPCs perished as a result of the actions of the adventurers the victim's

friends and family will confront them in anger blaming the party for their demise.

Integrated riders that are freed from a roggit bog frog's effects will be dazed and confused as to what has transpired, but will be fine within an hour's time. They will have fuzzy memories of their involvement in the battle.

Victims swallowed by a roggit bog frog would have surely died from the lethal amounts of acid within the roggit's stomach, but as the GM you may decide that they miraculously survive if the adventurers act fast enough to free them from the dead monstrosity.

You may decide to add this encounter into your existing campaign or story, or use it as a jumping-off point. If any roggit safely negotiated for their life, then perhaps it has information to share? Why are they here? Were they sent here by the campaign's villain or a hostile community or is this all a tragic coincidence or accident?

If the roggits all escaped or were killed, then the city leaders may decide to hire the adventurers to find out why these events have occurred and take the necessary steps to ensure the safety of the town. Searching the remains of the roggit bog frogs might begin this journey. Perhaps they swallowed an item or have runes etched into their skin?

Roggit Bog Frog

Large monstrosity, typically neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 56 (8d10+12)
Speed 25 ft., swim 40ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +2
Skills Deception +5, Insight +2, Intimidation +5, Perception +2
Damage Immunities acid
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 12
Languages the languages known by its integrated rider, but only able to speak through it rider
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)
Proficiency Bonus +2

***Amphibious*.** The roggit bog frog can breathe air and water.

Standing Leap. The roggit bog frog's long jump is up to 25 feet, and its high jump is up to 15 feet, with or without a running start.

Bonus Actions

Saddle Up. The roggit bog frog places a charmed, grappled humanoid creature of Medium size or smaller on its back. The frog's back sprouts thin hairs that meld into the victim to hold them in place. The integrated rider remains charmed until freed from the frog.

Squeeze. The roggit bog frog squeezes a creature it has grappled with its tongue, dealing 11 (2d6+ 4) bludgeoning damage to it (no attack roll required).

Actions

Multiattack. If the roggit bog frog has a rider integrated onto its back, it can make an attack with its Slowing Sphere, and then either make a Tongue Wrap or Swallow attack.

Tongue Wrap. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one Medium or smaller creature. Hit: The target is grappled, and must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw, or be charmed by the roggit bog frog. The charm lasts for 1 minute, or until the frog uses its Swallow action, or Squeeze bonus action on the target. On a successful saving throw, the target is not charmed, but still grappled.

Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the frog cannot use its tongue against another target.

Swallow. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one Medium or smaller creature the roggit bog frog has grappled with its tongue. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. The swallowed target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the frog, and it takes 10 (3d6) acid damage at the start of each of the frog's turns. The frog can have only one target swallowed at a time.

If the roggit bog frog dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 5 feet of movement, exiting prone.

Slowing Sphere (only usable with integrated rider). *Magic Spell Attack*: +5 to hit, range 30 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d4 +1) acid damage, and the target must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, or be slowed until the end of its next turn. An affected target's speed is halved, it takes a −2 penalty to AC and Dexterity saving throws, and it can't use reactions. On its turn, it can use either an action or a bonus action, not both.or Swallow attack.

Asfaraba

Easy to Deadly Encounter
Complexity Level: **Difficult**

The Scene

Thousands of voices carry through the city, punctuated by the clacking of hooves as beasts of burden carry goods and people alike through cobbled streets. The sights, sounds and smells of the bustling metropolis stimulate all your senses as you walk the stones of an urban landscape.

Suddenly, with no immediate indication as to why, all sound becomes silent. The soft breeze fades to a halt, the sun flickers in the sky, and for but a moment, time seems to pause as you find your attention inexorably drawn towards the heart of the city.

This encounter takes place in a major city, or densely populated area, that is in a state of heightened emotion. This build-up of mortal emotions has given birth to an asfaraba.

Standing over twenty feet tall, asfaraba are ancient and tremendous beings. Their skin is a pale gray, and their faces are very soft with non-pronounced features. In addition to the flowing yellow robes, asfaraba typically wear grotesque ivory masks with bizarre and twisted features.

The first asfaraba were born from the emotions of the gods but, when enough mortals are gathered in one place feeling something in unison, on rare occasions, an asfaraba can appear.

Asfaraba are highly emotional beings, and have personalities that reflect the emotions responsible for summoning them.

The situation surrounding the creature's birth might vary in your encounter. The city may be experiencing a famine, plague, or war that has caused the populace to become highly distressed. It is also possible that the kingdom is in mourning, perhaps after the death of a beloved ruler.

Whatever the cause, in this encounter the general population is likely depressed, despondent, and entirely unhappy.

Let's Prepare

The Setup

The characters are in a major city that is going through hardship of some kind. An asfaraba has just been born in the city center, causing panic in the streets. Most regular citizens are likely to flee, running away as fast as possible while the town guards try to usher people to safety from this unknown potential threat.

The characters most likely get involved by choice as they move to investigate the commotion in town but, if they need a push in the right direction, perhaps their help is requested by a local authority or other NPC the characters have interacted with previously.

There is also the option of the asfaraba appearing in the same area where the players just so happen to be. Regardless of how the opening moments of an asfaraba's birth in town are presented to the players, they are likely going to find themselves in an environment of terror and confusion about what is happening.

The Threat

The asfaraba are an intelligent and powerful race that possess an incredible depth of emotion which they learn to control over time. A newborn asfaraba, while still as intelligent and as powerful as other members of its race, has very little control over its emotional state.

The personality of an asfaraba is heavily inspired by the emotions that brought it to life and, as such, a newborn asfaraba born from fear and sadness, with little to no control over its emotions, is a massive threat to anyone who happens to be nearby. The asfaraba in this particular encounter is about to have the mother of all tantrums.

The party is dealing with a nigh-unhinged cosmic being that is overwhelmed with despair. It is liable to lash out at anyone it spots and must be stopped.

There are a few ways the players can go about this. They might calm the creature and attempt to communicate with it, they might find some way to trap it, or they may decide it is too dangerous to be left alive.

Ultimately, their goal should be to stop the asfaraba from wreaking havoc in the city before it is able to cause harm to any innocent bystanders.

Roll for Initiative

Starting the Encounter

The initial scene of chaos created by the appearance of an asfaraba is something the characters will have to manage if they want to keep their footing. During the first round of combat, each character must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics) check to avoid being knocked prone by the crowd of

people trying to get away. You can choose to ignore this step of the encounter if the players wait for the crowd to disperse before they move forward, however the asfaraba may kill a few bystanders if they take too long to intervene.

The cries of the asfaraba echo far and wide, filling the city streets with sorrowful wails. The area surrounding the asfaraba begins to shift and warp reality to reflect its emotional state. When writhing in despair, the city begins to look like a grim reflection of its true self. Structures begin to droop, as if reeling with sadness. The weather shifts into a heavy rainstorm, and the wind rips through the cracks in doors and windows as if to join the asfaraba in its sorrow. These effects prevail until the asfaraba is dead or calmed down.

All creatures within 120 feet of the asfaraba must make a DC 10 Charisma saving throw at the start of each of their turns during this encounter. On a failure, the creature is overcome with despair during their turn, suffering the following effects.

- Their movement speed is reduced by 10 feet.
- They have disadvantage on skill checks and saving throws.

Option: Make Peace, Not War

The asfaraba begins this encounter in a terrified state (-40 on the table below). If it has already been attacked by one of the players, it is in a state of total panic (-50 on the table below). Once the asfaraba's emotional state becomes calm (0 on the table below), the encounter ends, and you can move on to 'Ending The Encounter'.

As an action, on each player's turn, they can choose one of their skills to use in an attempt to calm the asfaraba down. Each skill used by a player must be different from the skill they used the previous turn. For example, if a player uses Persuasion to try and calmly talk to the asfaraba, on that player's next turn they must choose a different skill. However, on their third turn, they may use Persuasion again, since it was not the skill used the previous turn.

Every skill has an assigned DC and outcome detailed in the table below. You should encourage your players to describe how they intend to use their skills in a helpful way, consulting the table to determine the results.

Don't forget that you are the final authority on skill checks and their results! If a player chooses to use a skill, and describes an unconventional way they think that skill will be useful (and they are able to back it up with a successful roll), feel free to adjust the effect of the skill check's results to something you feel is more appropriate.

For example, the Medicine check result detailed below assumes a character uses their medical knowledge to find the best approach to calming the asfaraba, thus it grants a bonus to its emotional state for every subsequent round. It is entirely possible that, in your version of this encounter, the asfaraba has been hurt somehow, and a player chooses to use their Medicine skill to tend the asfaraba's wound. This might instead result in a +10

bonus to the creature's emotional state, as it realizes the people around it are trying to help.

It should also be noted that the calm emotions spell will not immediately resolve this encounter, as the asfaraba is an emotional being of tremendous power. The spell will, however, grant advantage to the players on any skill checks they make while the spell is active.

Asfaraba Emotional State	Effect
0 // Calm	Everything is alright
-10 // Anxious	The asfaraba will not take any actively aggressive actions against another creature, however its wailing effect is still in place.
-20 // Distressed	-
-30 // Fearful	-
-40 // Terrified	-
-50 // Total Panic	The Asfaraba has advantage on attack rolls.

Tactics and Adaptations

Asfaraba are incredibly diverse monsters. As creatures capable of casting any spell of 7th level or lower, you can make this encounter as deadly or as simple as you would like.

For low-level groups (approximately level 1 - 4), fighting an asfaraba is a nearly impossible feat but, if you want to facilitate this as an option, consider playing up the fact that the asfaraba is a new-born and still fairly weak. Perhaps it can only cast cantrips or 1st level spells. You will also want to reduce its hit points and armor class to something more appropriate for your group (see Chapter X: Quintessential Guide to Adapting Encounters, included in full version of QGtME).

For mid-level groups (approximately level 5 - 10) that choose to fight the asfaraba, you should not allow it to cast any spell above 3rd level.

For any group above level 10, this monster should function as written.

Ending the Encounter

When an asfaraba is killed, it leaves behind a hole in reality, as detailed in the asfaraba's Death Shroud trait. This hole is permanent, and acts as a portal between the spot where the asfaraba died and any other location (to be determined by the GM). If you want to begin a plane-hopping adventure to other worlds, this is an excellent way to begin that journey.

If, during the encounter, a character was eradicated by the asfaraba using its Power Word: Eradicate action, this portal could also be the start of an adventure to an alternate reality where that eradicated player might be rescued from their fate.

It is also possible that the players may choose not to step through the mysterious portal; perhaps the town seals it up behind a stone monument, where it can be saved for another adventure!

Once the asfaraba is dealt with, whether the players chose to calm it down or kill it, within an hour a group of three asfaraba emissaries arrive.

These emissaries sensed the birth of a new asfaraba, and hope to take it back home to be with its people. They are mysterious and alien. They appear wearing the standard garb of the asfarabian people: ancient yellow cloaks and emerald finery, complete with a collection of ivory white masks they use to express themselves. In stark contrast to the asfaraba the players have just encountered, these emissaries are calm and collected. They seem to have complete mastery over their emotions. They are happy to answer any questions the players might have about their race, but they will not linger for too long before departing back to their world.

If the asfaraba is still alive, they thank the players for their gracious handling of the situation. They may offer them a reward as thanks, which can be any assortment of treasure the GM deems appropriate. Among the rewards offered to the players, they will bestow an ivory mask of

USE WITH CAUTION

'Power Word: Kill' is an incredibly powerful ability, and the asfaraba's ability to use it once per day is no joke! Against lower level adventuring groups without access to spells like revivify, it is advisable to use this action carefully. Consider having the asfaraba use this action against a bystander or an NPC combatant to show its power without outright killing a player character.

Remember, the asfaraba is panicked; it is not always going to make the most logical decision. Another effective use of this ability is to target a player character you know has more than 100 hit points. You might describe how the player feels the power word resonate in their mind, but they are able to resist its command to instantly die. This should put in perspective how dangerous the creature is without immediately taking someone out of the fight.

the asfaraba. Impressed with their abilities, it is also possible that the emissaries will take a special interest in the players, offering them an opportunity to travel to their home-plane of existence to further aid them in another matter, if the GM so chooses.

If the asfaraba is dead upon the arrival of the emissaries, they are not aggressive towards the players or the city. Instead, they offer a degree of understanding. They are aware how dangerous their race can be when they possess no control over their emotions.

They will however, not be quite so grateful to the players, and will likely not offer them any kind of reward, instead explaining that they can seal the hole in reality left behind by the deceased asfaraba, if the players wish it. They may take interest in the party's ability to slay an asfaraba, seeing as they are extraordinarily powerful beings. The emissaries may offer the players a reward if they are able to hunt down and destroy another rogue asfaraba who has been causing trouble for them on their home-plane, at the GM's discretion.

Once the emissaries are ready to depart, they vanish in the blink of an eye, leaving nothing behind but a faint gust of wind.

Asfaraba

Huge aberration, unaligned

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 230 (20d12+100)
Speed 40 ft., fly 40ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	20 (+5)	20 (+5)	20 (+5)	20 (+5)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Str +11, Dex +11, Con +11, Int +11, Wis +11, Cha +11
Skills Arcana +11, History +11, Insight +11, Perception +11
Damage Resistances cold, fire, poison
Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned
Senses blindsight 60 ft., truesight 120ft., passive Perception 21
Languages all
Challenge 18 (20,000 XP)
Proficiency Bonus +6

Magic Items

Ivory Mask of the Asfaraba

Wonderous item, legendary

This mask is cold to the touch. While wearing the mask, you can use a bonus action to cast alter self or calm emotions at will, targeting yourself

Asfaraba

Huge aberration, unaligned

Orators of Truth. When an asfaraba speaks a power word, it alters reality to transform the spoken word into truth. Damage caused by the asfaraba's power words is unavoidable and can't be prevented in any way beyond the reduction provided by a successful saving throw. If a power word requires a creature to make a saving throw, and that creature cannot hear the sound of the power word being spoken, the target has advantage on the saving throw to resist the power word's effects.

Death Shroud. When an asfaraba dies, its body dwindles into nothing, leaving behind a 15 foot tall, 15 foot wide hole in reality. The portal is dark and opaque. Those who look into the portal hear a torrent of whispers wrapped in violent wind, but are unable to discern anything about where the portal might lead.

The portal is a two-way gateway that can lead to any number of places. It might lead to another location on the plane where the asfaraba perished, or it might lead to a location on a completely different plane of existence altogether.

In some cases, it will lead to an alternate reality, one which might be very similar or very different from the one the portal originated on. The GM decides where the portal leads. A creature may pass through the portal as an action, taking with them anything they are holding or wearing.

Actions

Multiattack. The asfaraba uses its Unfathomable Presence. It then uses one Power Word.

Unfathomable Presence. Each creature of the asfaraba's choice, that is within 120 feet of it and aware of it, must succeed on a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw, or fall prone and become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the frightened effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful, or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the asfaraba's Unfathomable Presence for the next 24 hours.

Power Word: Arcane. The asfaraba casts any spell of 7th level or below.

Power Word: Kill (Once per Day). The asfaraba utters a word that compels one creature it can see within 60 feet to die instantly. If the creature it chooses has 100 hit points or fewer, it dies. Otherwise, the word has no effect.

Power Word: Eradicate. The asfaraba ushers a creature with 0 hit points that is within 30 feet beyond the veil of reality. The target must succeed on a DC 20 Charisma saving throw, or be erased from reality. A creature who is erased from reality no longer exists, and has never existed. The universe will bend to accommodate a version of itself most similar to its current state, but it will be one where the target was never a part of it.

Everyone that knew the target may attempt a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw to cling to their memories of the eradicated target, however, they may only attempt this saving throw once. Once a target has been eradicated, nothing can bring them back to life aside from the casting of a wish spell. It is up to the GM to determine how reality is reformed.

Legendary Actions

Power Word: Know. The asfaraba forces a creature within 60 feet of it to make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 18 (4d8) psychic damage, and the asfaraba is able to read that creature's mind. It gains insight into the creature's reasoning (if any), its emotional state, and something that looms large in its mind (such as something it worries over, loves, or hates).

Power Word: Move. The asfaraba magically teleports into a space within 500 feet.

Power Word: Pain (Costs 2 Actions). The asfaraba inflicts immeasurable pain to course through a creature it can see within 120 feet. The creature must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw, or take 18 (4d8) psychic damage and become paralyzed for 1 minute. The creature may attempt another Constitution saving throw at the start of each of its turns, ending the paralysis on a success.

For more information about asfaraba, see **Appendix A: Monster Lore.**

Skill Check Effects - Asfaraba

SKILL	DC	DESCRIPTION	EFFECT
Acrobatics	15	You use your dexterous movements to avoid the asfaraba as it lashes out.	On a success, +5 to the asfaraba's emotional state. You gain advantage on any saving throws to resist spells cast by the asfaraba, and the asfaraba has disadvantage on attack rolls made against you for the rest of the encounter. On a failure, you fall prone and have disadvantage on saving throws to resist the asfaraba's spells until the start of your next turn.
Animal Handling	20	You attempt to use your applied knowledge of beasts to calm the creature.	On a success, +10 to the asfaraba's emotional state. On a failure, nothing happens but, if any additional Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks are attempted and failed during the encounter, the asfaraba is insulted at being treated as a mere beast, resulting in -20 to the asfaraba's emotional state.
Arcana	25	You use your advanced knowledge of the arcane to try communicating with the asfaraba, using some rudimentary pieces of the language of creation you have seen written before. This is only possible when in the presence of the asfarba, due to the unstable nature it exudes.	On a success, +20 to the asfaraba's emotional state. On a failure, summon 1d6 hostile creatures of CR 3 or below. The GM can choose any creature from the core rule books they deem appropriate. All the creatures must be the same.
Athletics	18	You restrain the asfaraba, overpowering it and stopping aggressive actions for a time.	On a success or failure, -5 to the asfaraba's emotional state. Additionally, on a success, the asfaraba will not take any aggressive actions on its next turn, instead, using its time to break free from you.
Deception	17	You attempt to use flowery words and lies to calm the creature. If it detects your deception, it will surely make the situation worse.	On a success, +10 to the asfaraba's emotional state. On a failure, -10 to the asfaraba's emotional state.
History	20	You attempt to recall information about this strange creature, certain that you have read something about them somewhere.	Advantage on all future skill checks during this encounter.
Insight	20	You attempt to glean insight into how to best navigate the situation without resorting to violence.	The party gains an understanding of the asfaraba's emotions on a success, granting -2 to all future skill check DCs.

SKILL	DC	DESCRIPTION	EFFECT
Intimidation	13	You intimidate the creature, causing it to recoil in fear.	On a success or failure, -10 to the asfaraba's emotional state. Additionally, on a success, the asfaraba will not take aggressive actions on its next turn.
Investigation	15	You look for signs of something that might be helpful within the environment.	On a success, if the next skill check made by another player is successful, add an additional +15 to the asfaraba's emotional state.
Medicine	17	You use your medical training to find the best path to calm down the creature and help it process its emotions.	On a success, add +2 to the asfaraba's emotional state at the start of each of its turns for the rest of the encounter.
Nature	14	You scour your knowledge of the natural world for a fragment of information, or natural remedy, that might prove useful in calming the asfaraba.	On a success, +5 to the asfaraba's emotional state.
Perception	16	You look for potential threats that may be causing the asfaraba to become anxious, and move to eliminate them.	On a success, +5 to the asfaraba's emotional state.
Performance	15	You try to distract the asfaraba with song, dance, or some other kind of performance.	On a success, +10 to the asfaraba's emotional state. On a failure, the asfaraba creates a 15 foot zone of silence, centered on the person making the check, which lasts until the end of their next turn.
Persuasion	15	You calm the creature with soothing words.	On a success, +5 to the asfaraba's emotional state.
Religion	18	You recount what you know of the gods and their scriptures in an attempt to find words that will calm the asfaraba.	On a success, +10 to the asfaraba's emotional state. On a failure, the asfaraba is confused and immediately attacks the person speaking to them, with a bolt of fire dealing 1d10 damage.
Sleight of Hand	17	You hide your weapons from the asfaraba.	On a success, +5 to the asfaraba's emotional state.
Stealth	15	You move out of sight, lessening the perceived threat to the asfaraba.	On a success, +5 to the asfaraba's emotional state, and the asfaraba does not attack the creature who made the check on its next turn. On a failure, -5 to the asfaraba's emotional state.
Survival	18	You attempt to turn the asfaraba's attention to the weather, or some other feature of the wildlife that might be nearby.	On a success, +5 to the asfaraba's emotional state.

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